

**COWELL RANCH/JOHN MARSH STATE HISTORIC PARK
PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN/DRAFT EIR
PUBLIC MEETING**

Thursday, November 4, 2010

City of Brentwood
Senior Activity Center
193 Griffith Lane
Brentwood, CA 94513

5:30 – 7:30 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Issue Date: November 15, 2010

Agency Representatives

California State Parks

Ellie Wagner, Associate Landscape Architect
Steve Bachman, Acting District Superintendent
Roland Gaebert, Sector Superintendent
Lorrie Thomas-Dossett, District Maintenance Chief
Cyndy Shafer, Resource Ecologist
Breck Parkman, State Archaeologist
Rick Fitzgerald, Senior State Archaeologist

City of Brentwood

Craig Bronzan, Director, City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation

AECOM

Donna Plunkett, Project Manager
Stephanie Klock, Environmental Planner

Participants signed-in and enjoyed refreshments before the start of the meeting. The sign-in sheet is attached. The meeting began at 5:50 pm. Craig Bronzan, Director of the City of Brentwood Parks and Recreation, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the City's Senior Center and noted that the City is committed to continue their partnership with California State Parks. In addition to providing funding for the General Plan and EIR preparation, the City is also interested in providing assistance with implementation of the plan and future park improvements. Steve Bachman, Acting Diablo Vista District Superintendent for California State Parks then welcomed participants and introduced the team members representing California State Parks. He thanked everyone for their participation and help in developing the Park plan.

Following this he introduced Donna Plunkett, the Project Manager for the consultant team. She provided a brief statement about the General Plan process for the Park and the goals and intent of this particular meeting. She mentioned that written public comments on the Park plan could be submitted until December 9, 2010, the end of the CEQA public review period. She also mentioned that the Park plan document (a copy was available at the meeting) is also available at the Brentwood Public Library and at California State Parks Diablo Vista District office in Petaluma. It is also available on-line at the State Park website

under General Plans. The meeting proceeded according to the attached agenda and a summary follows below.

Presentation

Ms. Plunkett also welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked participants how they found out about the session. Some people read the news article or legal notice in the Contra Costa Times and others received word through the newsletter distribution. She explained the agenda in more detail and then asked if anyone had any questions or comments before beginning the presentation. She also noted that although we would take suggestions for the Park name tonight, this was not something that would be decided upon at this meeting. She mentioned that there were flip chart sheets available at the back of the room for anyone who would like to write a suggestion for the Park name. One member of the public noted that she would like to be sure that the name represents the Native American presence at the Park and to be sure that this aspect of the Park history is recognized in the name.

Ms. Plunkett began the PowerPoint presentation (attached) and noted what would be covered, an overview of the work to date on the General Plan and EIR and a summary of the public outreach and meetings that have taken place throughout the planning process. She also discussed how the document is set-up so that if participants are reviewing a copy at the library or on-line, they can understand how it is organized. She then reviewed the key resource topics that were studied and analyzed and informed the planning of the preferred alternative. She reiterated the mission of California State Parks and noted that the Park plan is designed to balance natural, cultural and recreational resources.

The presentation included an overview of the alternative development process and a brief description of each alternative. The remainder of the summary focused on the preferred alternative, the layout and location of Park management zones and how these are distributed within the Park. She noted the types of zones and activities that can take place in each area and briefly mentioned the acreages for each. She then described the last chapter of the plan which focuses on the environmental analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. The document provides a program-level Environmental Impact Report for the Park plan. She mentioned which topics were discussed in more detail for this plan, based on the site's resources and the proposed alternative for the Park. Ms. Plunkett then discussed the next steps following the meeting tonight and the timeline for approval of the plan by the State Park and Recreation Commission, most likely in the spring or summer of 2011. Thereafter, if resources allow, the Park could be opened to the public on a limited basis.

Public Comments

Ms. Plunkett then introduced the public comment period. She reminded participants that if they wished to refrain from voicing their comments or questions at this meeting, they could express their opinions on the comment card provided and hand it over to the planning team or mail it back. The following represents the comments and questions from the meeting:

Q: (Anonymous Participant). A question was asked if State Parks is partnering with East Bay Regional Park District (“EBRPD”) to coordinate trails and other recreational activities since they own land nearby and adjacent to the Park at Round Valley. Jim Townsend from EBRPD was in the audience and commented that there is already an active partnership with State Parks in that EBRPD currently leases the land for the Round Valley staging area from State Parks. It was also noted that future plan implementation would be a cooperative effort between the agencies.

Q: (Jim Townsend, EBRPD). Jim noted that the plan provides a good starting point to begin to develop recreational facilities for future Park users. He asked how the plan deals with the crossing of Marsh Creek Road at Round Valley and would there be a grade separated crossing. Ms. Plunkett noted that the plan does not specify exactly how the crossing will be designed or constructed but leaves options open for future study and depending on what will be most feasible. He also noted that the Marsh Creek Trail through the lands owned by the Contra Costa Water Conservation and Flood Control District (“CCWCFCFCD”) is an integral link in this area and should be a priority trail segment to build out. Ms. Plunkett noted that the CCWCFCFCD was continuing to study and analyze plans for improvements at the Marsh Creek Reservoir and that they are aware of the desire and need for this trail link. Additional meetings with them upon approval of the Park plan along with EBRPD staff are needed to work out the details of the trail easement.

Q: (Anonymous Participant). A neighbor of the Park who lives near Round Valley asked about the proposed visitor zone that is shown in this area and what exactly would be developed here. Ms. Plunkett noted that this area includes the provision for camping and trail linkages as well as additional visitor parking. She mentioned that the area provided for future development is larger than the area that will actually be developed in the long term. This is done so that State Parks has more flexibility with the future siting of facilities to be sensitive to resources and the surrounding context.

Q: Gene Metz (John Marsh Historic Trust). Mr. Metz raised several comments related to the celebration of the Park during the era of John Marsh, particularly the 1830s, 40s and 50s. He also noted that partnerships will be key to plan implementation and that the John Marsh Trust is continually committed to working with State Parks to realize the future rehabilitation of the house and associated landscape. He also suggested that if there is a way to lease some of the land in the Park for farming that this would be a traditional use of the land and also help to raise funds to manage the Park.

Q: (Anonymous Participant). A question was raised about the timeline for the rehabilitation of the house and if opening of the Park was dependant on this being completed. It was noted that the Park could open even if the house was not fully rehabilitated.

Q: Gene Metz (John Marsh Historic Trust). Gene Metz then provided a detailed summary of the work that has been done to date to stabilize the house and what else still needs to be done.

Q: (Anonymous Participant). A comment was provided that noted the positive aspect of having a dual focus on resource protection and public recreation. She asked if there would be opportunities for education, especially for Native American history and California history. It was noted that education and interpretation were important goals for State Parks and currently there is provision for this in the plan, including gathering areas for school groups or other educational opportunities.

Q: (Anonymous Participant). A participant asked if the State Parks staff makes a recommendation to the Commission on the naming of the Park. It was noted that yes, State Parks will prepare a staff report to the Commission prior to the meeting that summarizes the recommendations.

Q: Gene Metz (John Marsh Historic Trust). Gene asked if there is a provision in the plan to provide rehabilitation of the historic landscape including the orchards and other gardens that once surrounded the John Marsh house. It was noted that this is something that could be considered as part of the house rehabilitation.

Plan Review

During this time, copies of the preferred alternative for the Park and the historic zone were on display and everyone had an opportunity to look at the plans more closely. State Parks and consultant staff were available to answer questions during this time.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Ms. Plunkett once again reminded attendees about the State Parks website and asked if there were any further questions or comments. No further questions were asked at this time. She noted that a few people provided suggestions for the Park name on the sheets provided. She shared these with the group. The following represents those that were listed:

- John Marsh State Historic Park (listed 4 times)
- Add “Meganos” to the name
- John Marsh Historic Park
- Keep reference to Native American history

She also reminded stakeholders that public comments could be provided up until December 9, 2010. Ms. Plunkett thanked the group for attending and for their participation and ended the meeting at approximately 7:20 PM.

Handouts Available at Meeting

- Meeting Agenda
- Comment Card

List of attachments

Handouts (2)

Photocopies of sign-in sheets (5)

Copy of PowerPoint presentation (16)